

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. XXXI. No. 24.] LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 14, 1816. [Price 1s. $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

737]

[738]

TO THE READER.

The next and every future Number of the Cheap Register will be printed in the *octavo form*, as a *pamphlet*; for, I now find that the law admits of this upon the payment of a *trifling tax*. This form will be much more convenient than the open sheet; it will keep the print more clean; it will enable the readers to form the series of Numbers into *books*; and it will still be sold at the *same price*—2d. each retail, 12s. 6d. a hundred, and, to those who live in the *country*, 110s. a thousand, if a thousand, or more, be taken by one person *regularly every week*. The *profit* upon a hundred is 4s. 2d. and on a thousand, taken as above, 2l. 8s. 8d.

A LETTER

TO

HENRY HUNT, Esq.

Of Middleton Cottage, near Andover,

ON THE

LONDON PLOTS!

London, 13th Dec. 1816.

SIR,

THE summer before last, when you came over to Botley and found me transplanting Swedish turnips amidst dust, and under a Sun which scorched the leaves till they resembled fried parsley, you remember

how I was fretting and stewing; how many times in an hour I was looking out for a south-western cloud; how I watched the mercury in the glass, and rapped the glass with my knuckles to try to move it in my favour. But, great as my anxiety then was, and ludicrous as were my movements, ten thousand times greater has been that of Corruption's Press for the coming of a PLOT, and ten thousand times more ludicrous its movements in order to hasten the accomplishment of its wishes! You remember how my wife laughed at me, when, in the evening, some boys having thrown a handful or two of sand over the wall, that made a sort of dropping on the leaves of the laurels, I took it for the beginning of a shower, and pulled off my hat and held up my hand to see whether more was not coming, though there was nothing to be seen in the sky but stars shining as bright as silver. Just such has been the conduct of Corruption's sons upon hearing of the *discovery* of Mr. WATSON's and Mr. PRESTON's *papers*! They sigh for a PLOT, Oh, how they sigh! They are working and slaving and fretting and stewing; they are sweating all over; they are absolutely pining and dying for a Plot!

In these their wishes it is hard to say which character is most prominent, the *fool* or the *knav*; for, if by any means, they were to make out the real existence of a Plot for

names ; we challenge our adversaries into the field of discussion; we contend for rights which we think we are entitled to ; we think that we have justice and even policy on our side ; and we are *answered* by every species of scurrility and of calumny. These have prevailed heretofore, but they will prevail no longer. The people are enlightened, and the power of calumny is at an end. We contend, that it is the taxes, the loans, the Debt and the paper-money, which are the real causes of our sufferings. We think, that a Reformed Parliament, annually chosen by ballot by the *People* at large, would be able to put all to rights, in a short time, and to prevent such evils in future. We give our reasons for this belief ; and we are *answered* by foul names and atrociously false accusations. We recommend the people to petition for a constitutional Reform in the Representation, and the corrupt press recommends the Ministers to seize our persons and strip us of our property.

It is my sincere opinion, that the *hope* held out of a Reform of the Parliament has done, and is doing, more for the tranquillity of the country than all the other means put together ; and, as far as I myself am concerned, or have any power to do good or harm, I am perfectly convinced, that if I could possibly entertain

the cruel and unnatural wish of seeing my country plunged into confusion and bloodshed, my course would be, not to write Registers, but *never to write or utter another word upon public affairs* ; and, I am certain, that if the press and all popular discussion could, at once be put an end to, it would not be one single month before pillage, devastation and carnage would spread themselves over every part of the country. It is my belief, that the encouragement given to the people to hope for an approaching *Reform* is the best security for the public tranquillity as well as for a return of happiness ; it is this belief which has induced me to take the liberty to address your Lordship, and to endeavour to prevail on you to give your powerful aid in the strengthening of a hope, the enfeebling of which I cannot help regarding as the sure forerunner of calamities such as never were experienced by any nation in the world.

I am, with the greatest respect,
Your Lordship's most obedient,
and most humble Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

The next Register will contain a Letter to the COUNTRY 'SQUIRES.

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In these their wishes it is hard to say which character is most prominent, the *fool* or the *knaves*; for, if by any means, they were to make out the real existence of a Plot for

the destruction of the government, would such proof tend to the *credit* of that government in the eyes of the world at large or in those of the people of this kingdom? Would it tend to make the world believe, that the government is good and is beloved by the people? Would it tend to lessen the mass of misery that is now in existence? Would it tend to enable the Landlords and Farmers to pay the interest of the Debt? And, if it would have no such tendency, what good could arise to the government from the producing of even undeniable proof of the existence of a Plot of any sort, however extensive?

But as clearly appears from all their publications, the main hope of Corruption's sons has been to trace a Plot to YOU! In order to effect this, they have stuck at nothing that villainy could suggest. They have asserted as admitted facts hundreds of falsehoods. As a specimen of these, the *Times*, *Sun*, *Courier*, and others have stated "on authority," that you and I were in *close consultation*, on the Sunday before the riots, with *Lord Cochrane* in the King's Bench Prison. You know that you were at *Wanstead*, in *Essex*, all that day; and I know that I was at *Peckham*, in *Surrey*, never having seen you on that day and not until the succeeding Tuesday. The wretched man who conducts the *Sun* newspaper asserted, that I came up for the express purpose of organizing the Plot; and that, having prepared every thing, I set off to *Botley* the night before it broke out.—Here I have been in London, however, without having stirred out of it one

minute from that time to this. I could mention a hundred other falsehoods which the sons of Corruption have sent forth with equal boldness, with equal impudence, and with equal baseness. But, the *Times* newspaper, always pre-eminent in infamy, asserted, that "*Young Cobbett*" was one of the persons who spent the evening with you after your return from the Spa-fields Meeting on the Monday. The object of this falsehood was to alarm his mother and sisters for his safety, seeing that that statement was accompanied with other falsehoods calculated to excite a fear that all who were with you that evening would be implicated in some state crime! It is for the *Courier*, the *Sun*, the *Post*, and some others, to be guilty of pre-meditated falsehoods, but it is only, I believe, for *WALTER*, the Proprietor of the *Times*, and the instigator to the killing of the brave Marshal Ney, to be guilty of such baseness as this.

However, even these falsehoods will tend to good. There are yet many very worthy people, who have believed in the statement of these sons of Corruption; who, judging too much from their own hearts and minds, have not been able to work themselves into a belief, that other men could be so totally void of all sense of moral feeling as coolly to put upon paper, in the most serious and solemn manner, and to send forth as acknowledged truths, that which they knew to be utterly false. To such worthy persons it seems to be a libel on human nature to suppose, that such black-hearted villainy can be in existence. They cannot con-

ceive how a man can dare walk the streets, or how he can look even his acquaintances or his own family in the face, after being guilty of such shameful conduct. They now see, however, that this really is the case; and, though there are some who will still, from corrupt motives *affect* to believe in the statements of these corrupt men, there will, I hope, be found a great many to say, that they have been deceived, and that they will be deceived no longer.

The unfortunate men, whom want and ruin have driven to deeds of desperation, are not, with all their temptations, more desperate in their way than are the sons of Corruption in theirs, without any temptation at all. The numerous and ponderous facts, the clear and forcible arguments, by which they have been assailed, leave them no means of *defence*. —They have been driven to the wall, beaten, subdued. They dare not show themselves in the field of dispute. They, therefore, resort to false accusations; and, unable to find any thing upon which to put a false construction, they have, at last, thrown aside all attempts to discover the means of misrepresentation, and have had recourse to open, unblushing, to sheer *invented falsehoods*. That love of *fair play*, for which all orders of Englishmen in all ages have been so famed, finds no place in the bosoms of these degenerate men. They enter the ring with seeming bravery, but being, round after round, knocked down and crippled, they use, like a Dutchman, their remaining strength to draw out a *snigarsnee* to run into our bowels. Let us, however, by a steady and

cool perseverance in the cause of our country's freedom and happiness, endeavour to break the arm that wields this hateful instrument of malignity and cowardice.

You, conscious of your honourable motives, and listening only to your courage, have always been deaf to the intreaties of those who cautioned you against the danger of spies and false-witnesses. But, do you think, that the wretches who could be base enough to publish falsehoods such as I have enumerated above; who could coolly represent you as having been sent first to jail and then to Bedlam; and who, in order to deter me from my duty, could exhibit my son as being in danger of his life, and thereby cause alarm in his mother and sisters: do you think that men so lost to all sense of shame, and so devoted to every thing that is corrupt; do you think they would hesitate one moment to bribe villains to swear falsely against you or against me or against any man, whom they thought it their interest to destroy? Nay, do you think, that they would hesitate one single half moment to be guilty, for such a purpose, of the blackest perjury themselves? Be you assured, that there is nothing of which such men are not capable; intimidation, promises, bribes, perjury, any thing such men are capable of recommending to others, or of doing themselves. Your country life, your sober habits, your dislike of feastings and carousings; these are great securities; but, while you follow the impulses of your public-spirit and your valour, I hope you will always bear in mind, that there are such things as *false-swearers* in the world, and that a defeated

coward has never been known to be otherwise than inexorably cruel. The proprietor of the MORNING POST, in his paper of last Monday, says, that COBBETT and HUNT ought, at least, to *lose their lives*; and the author of the ANTIGALLICAN has, I am told, put the drawing of a gallows in his paper, with a rope ready for use, having *my name* on it, or very near it.— And, you may be well assured, that, if the *false oaths* of these men could do the job, those oaths would be very much at our service. Therefore, though I am quite sure, that these menaces will not deter you from doing any thing, which you would have done if the menaces had never been made; yet, as being proofs of the shameless, the remorseless, the desperate villainy of these tools, their present conduct ought to impress on your mind the necessity of being on your guard, so far, at least, as not *unnecessarily to expose yourself to the consequences of false-swearings*. These men and their associates call the younger Mr. WATSON (whom they, without proof, charge with shooting Mr. PLATT) an *assassin*, though they themselves state, that the shot arose from the seizure of Watson by Platt, and that the former, like a wild enthusiast as he appears to have been, expressed his sorrow on the instant, and actually went to work to save the life of the wounded man. Nobody justifies, or attempts to justify, the shooter; but, if he were an *assassin*, what are these men, who, while they keep their names hidden, are endeavouring to produce persecution and ruin and death in every direction? The man who shot Mr. PLATT, though highly criminal,

is not a thousandth part so criminal as these men, who to premeditated bloody-mindedness add a degree of cowardice such as was never before heard of.

Let me now, before I proceed to other topics, hastily trace the *Progress of the developement of the Plot*, as given to us through the channel of these same papers. When Mr. WATSON the elder was taken, the sons of Corruption promised the public a series of grand discoveries. His answers to the questions put to him, appear, however, to have been perfectly open and frank. All that was really found out from him was, that he was a surgeon who had lived in great esteem, and had a family who had been rendered so miserable by want, that “a lovely daughter of his ‘had died for the want of the things, ‘such as wine, &c. necessary to her ‘recovery.’” His story, of the truth of which there appears to be no doubt, would have softened any hearts but those of the sons of Corruption, who, instead of expressing compassion for his calamities, are as loudly vociferating for his blood, as they did for the blood of Marshal Ney. They tell us, that he attributed all the sufferings of himself and others “to the “Oligarchy;” but, not a word does he seem to have said, that can justify these detestable writers in imputing to him any share in any Plot or in any Riot.

The lodgings of himself and his son have been searched, and all their papers seized, amongst the rest, we are told a *Letter from you* to the younger Watson. Oh! what a prize! How the eye must have glistened upon the sight of your name at

the bottom of a letter to the "Chief Conspirator," as they call him! With what eager haste were the contents run over! With what trembling, what slavering expectation must those contents have been perused! Alas! How the head must have turned slowly away and the Letter have fallen gently upon the table, when those contents became intelligible to the fluttering senses, now returned to a state of coolness!

Corruption's darlings confess, that there was nothing in "*this*" letter that showed you to have had any criminal hand in "*the conspiracy*." How came these news-paper writers to *know* the contents of your letter? *Who* was it that *authorised them* to publish this account of your letter? Either they know its contents, or they do not: if the latter, they have published what they do not know to be true; if the former, *why* do they not publish *the whole* of those contents? The reason is this; the contents of your letter would convince every man who should see them, that you were not only ignorant of any Plot or Conspiracy; but that, if your correspondent *really had* any such views, (which I do not believe) your letter was calculated to *check* any hope that he might have entertained of having your co-operation. This is what, I venture to say, the contents of your letter would have proved to the satisfaction of every well-wisher to the peace and happiness of the country; and because they would have proved *this*, these base writers have carefully kept them out of their columns!

But, Mr. PRESTON, they tell us, boldly avows the intended "*insurrec-*

tion," and *confesses* all that can be wished, except, indeed, the main thing, which is that *you* had a hand in the said "*insurrection*." However, this is *all a falsehood*; and, if the *proof* of its falsehood be not made clearly appear before this day month, I will be content to pass for an ideot for the rest of my life. The account of Mr. PRESTON's "*confessions*," as the sons of Corruption call them, you shall have in their own words. The Lord Mayor, it seems, went to Mr. PRESTON's house, and having examined him and his papers, found no grounds for detaining him; but, since that, he has been, it appears, taken up and kept in custody, and the following is the account which Corruption's Press gives of his examination:—

"The next person of importance
"who has been apprehended is *Thomas Preston*, who is called the *Secretary* to the Spa-fields Committee. This poor wretch lives with his two daughters in a small room in Greystoke-place, Fetter-lane. He has undergone two or three examinations, in all which he has been as communicative as the most zealous could have wished.—The substance of all he related is accurately thus—that a plan of *insurrection* was formed—that it was as general as it was good, but that precipitancy had injured its progress, though it had not defeated its object. The plan, he asserted, must still be carried into effect—it was too powerful to be resisted when properly undertaken, and the only resource left to the Government, in order to its being averted, was, by the Prince Regent answering the petition of the people, and

"the immediate adoption of Parliamentary Reform. 'The soldiers,' he added, 'were not firm; their friends were starving, but *they*, having a provision, forgot their pledge and duty. He acknowledged his connection to the fullest extent with the Spa-fields Meetings, to which he was a joint secretary. He knew the two Watsons, and had frequently acted with them upon the Committees, and various other occasions. He denied having taken the slightest part in the riotous proceedings of Monday, and deprecated in the strongest manner the horrid system of taking away the life of a fellow creature. He frequently repeated, that the plan was constitutional, and delivered the whole of his account in the most undisguised and enthusiastic manner.' In another examination he is stated to have said, that 'the PLOT had been going on for EIGHT YEARS, and that he himself HAD WRITTEN TO THE LATE MR. PERCEVAL ON THE SUBJECT, urging him to ADOPT it, as the only means of SAVING THE NATION!'

Now, when your laughing fit is over, let me ask you, whether you ever heard of a *Plot* and *Insurrection* like this before? What! an eight-years' Plot! a *good* Insurrection!—DENNIS, in his criticism upon Addison's silly play of *Cato*, ridicules the idea of the conspirators against Cato's life picking out *Cato's own hall* for the scene of their consultations; but these modern Plotters beat SYPHAX and his associates hollow; for, they, in order to further their view of destroying the government, communicate

their Plot to the Prime Minister himself!

What must the people *in the country* think of all this? What a mass of absurdities and contradictions! What madness it all appears to be! *Good* insurrections; *constitutional* attacks on the government! *Plots* which the prime minister has been urged to adopt in order to save the nation!—What *can* the people at large make out of such a strange medley? The sons of Corruption it is who have made the medley. They wanted a *Plot*. The mad riots in the city afforded them a pretext, and they have put the words **PLOT** and **INSURRECTION** *into Mr. Preston's mouth* in order to favour their views. Now, let us see how a plain tale will put them down and expose their malice to the world.

About sixteen years ago, a Mr. SPENCE, a schoolmaster, in Yorkshire, conceived what he called a **PLAN** for making the nation happy, by taking all the lands into the hands of a just government, and appropriating all the produce or profit to the support of the people, so that there would be no one in want, and all would live in a sort of *Christian Brotherhood*. This Plan, accompanied with some political remarks, he published in 1800, for which he was pursued by a Criminal Information Ex-Officio, by the present Chief Justice, who was then Attorney General.—When brought up for trial I was present in the Court of King's Bench. He had no counsel, but defended himself and insisted that his views were *pure* and *benevolent*, in proof of which, in spite of all exhortations to the contrary, he read his pamphlet

through. He was found *guilty* and sentenced to be imprisoned for I forget how long. He was a plain, unaffected, inoffensive looking creature. He did not seem at all afraid of any punishment, and appeared much more anxious about the success of his *plan* than about the preservation of his life. After he came out of prison, he pursued the inculcation of his *plan*, appearing to have no other care; and, this he did, I am assured, to the day of his death, always having been a most virtuous and inoffensive man, and always very much beloved by those who knew him.

We have all seen, for years past, *written on the walls*, in and near London, these words, “SPENCE’S ‘PLAN;’” and I never knew what it meant, until, a little while ago I received a pamphlet from Mr. EVANS, Newcastle Street, Strand, detailing the *Plan* very fully. This Mr. Evans, I understand to be a very worthy man, and his pamphlet, though I do not agree with it in opinion as to many of its propositions, contains interesting observations, and breathes a spirit of benevolence throughout the whole.

Mr. PRESTON and the WATSONS appear to have been followers of Mr. SPENCE; and, the “*plan*” of which Mr. Preston is said to have “confessed” the existence, is, as you will see, “Spence’s Plan,” and nothing more; and nothing more, no, not a hair more, will Corruption’s sons, with all their torturing and twisting, with all their falsehoods and affected alarms, be able to make of it! Thus, you will clearly perceive, that the “confessions,” as they are called, of your correspondent,

Mr. Preston, are no confessions at all. You will clearly see, that Corruption’s Press has foisted in the words *insurrection* and *plot*; for, unless you see this, what sense is there in the words *good* and *constitutional*? What absurdity to believe, that a man, and a *guilty* man, too, would talk about a *good* insurrection and about a plot that was *constitutional*, and which plot had been going on for *eight years* and had been *communicated to Mr. Perceval* as the only means of saving the nation! But, strip these lying accounts of the words *insurrection* and *plot*, and leave the word *plan*, and then the whole, however wild in itself, becomes perfectly consistent; and such, you may depend on it, and no other, has been the “confession” of Mr. Preston.

The COURIER of Monday last, in pursuance of its endeavours to keep the scent of a *plot* from cooling, has these remarks: “Whether the *plan* of the rioters was to commence in the morning or at night, is not ascertained; but from the declaration of Preston, who charges young Watson with *precipitancy*, it appears that the operations were not to commence till dark. Preston still maintains a high and indignant tone; he talks more *enthusiastically* than before of the extent of the *plot*, and adds, that not less than three hundred thousand persons were enrolled in the cause. Hooper, who states Preston to be the instigator and great machinist of the *conspiracy*, has declared that the two Watsons, himself, and Preston, were in concert together in Spa-fields on the morning of Monday.”—Now, I dare

say, that it will finally turn out, that Hooper has said no such thing as is here stated ; but, here again you see, that the words *plot* and *conspiracy* are used instead of the word *plan*, and this is manifestly for the base and diabolical purpose of causing the people to believe, that there has been a *conspiracy* against the government, and that *all the Reformers* are enrolled in this *conspiracy* ! But, be you well assured, that these eager efforts to excite alarm will fail of their purpose, and that the workers in them and their abettors will come out of the attempt covered with infamy, though nothing can produce in them any feeling of shame.

In the mean while the SPENCEONIANS are posting up all about the prospectus of this *Plan*; and, as if for the express purpose of preparing the way for their own everlasting disgrace, the owners of the Corrupt Press are publishing this very document, which I insert here as taken from the Courier of Monday.

"The following hand-bill, it is stated, was circulated through the Metropolis yesterday, and excited much apprehension :—

"SPENCE'S PLAN

For Parochial Partnerships in the Land,
Is the only effectual Remedy for the
Distresses and Oppressions of the People.
The Landholders are not Proprietors in Chief; they
are but the
Stewards of the Public;
For the LAND is the PEOPLE's FARM.
The Expenses of the Government do not cause
the Misery that surrounds us, but the
enormous exactions of these
"Unjust Stewards."
Landed Monopoly is indeed equally contrary to
the benign
Spirit of Christianity, and destructive of
The Independence and Morality of all Mankind.
"The Profit of the Earth is for all;"
Yet how deplorably destitute are the great Mass
of the People!

Nor is it possible for their situation to be radically amended, but by the establishment of a system,

Founded on the immutable basis of Nature and Justice.

Experience demonstrates its necessity; and the rights of mankind require it for their preservation.

To obtain this important object; by extending the knowledge of the above system, the Society of Spencean Philanthropists has been instituted. Further information of its principles may be obtained by attending any of its Sectional Meetings, where subjects are discussed calculated to enlighten the human understanding, and where also the regulations of the Society may be procured, containing a complete developement of the Spencean System.—Every individual is admitted, free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum.

The Meetings of the Society begin at a quarter after eight in the evening, as under :

First Section, every Wednesday, at the Cock, Grafton-street, Soho.

Second - - - - - Thursday, - - Mulberry Tree, Mulberry-court, Wilson-street, Moorfields.

Third - - - - - Monday, - - Nag's Head, Carnaby-market.

Fourth - - - - - Tuesday, - - No. 8, Lumber-street, Mint, Borough."

This is the Plan ! This is the plan, the plot, the conspiracy, and the insurrection scheme ! And, what an impudent, what an incorrigible, what a hardened impostor, must this writer be, who can tell the public, that this hand-bill "excited much apprehension!" Apprehension, I believe, indeed, in him and his associates and encouragers; for it furnishes the clue to unravel all their falsehoods, and to expose them to scorn and detestation; but, it is calculated to excite "apprehension" in nobody else. The public indignation is fast collecting and winding up to a high pitch; and it only waits the result of the present examinations to pour down upon the heads of these corrupt instigators to fury and bloodshed. A gang of spies and informers, in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, who, after long and wearisome contrivances to discover a plot and to get the reward, just at the moment when they are expecting to



see their victim swing and to pocket the blood money, are sent away abashed and confounded by the discovery, that it was a *Cod's Head*, and not that of the *Sovereign*, against which he has been *plotting*. Not less complete would be the confusion of these corrupt writers, if it were not that they are destitute of every feeling that can lead to shame or remorse.

Monstrous, however, as are the baseness and malice and cruelty of these men, these are, I think, still exceeded by their *folly*. The main object of all their endeavours, is, very clearly to render you odious and to put you down; and, if they had been created for the express purpose of exalting you, it would have been impossible for them to labour to that end with more zeal or more effect. Your manner of conducting the second Meeting, the way in which you carried on your communications with the government, the punctuality and decorum of your proceedings, the language and matter of your Resolutions and Petition, and the *effect* of these, very justly entitled you to a large share of public applause; but, the blows which these ferocious writers have aimed at your *life*, have excited an interest in your favour such as no human being could have thought possible, and in the tide of which are completely drowned all your momentary errors and indiscretions, which, besides, having arisen from an excess of zeal, were not calculated to be long held in remembrance. Some very good but very weak and timid people talked of your *violence*, while they seemed to overlook the *violent* thing which you attacked; but, in the minds of all good men, there is an inherent abhorrence of baseness like that which has aimed its viperous sting against your life; and, in the present case, this abhorrence has overpowered all the alarms of the good and timid people in whose breasts what is called your violence had excited such alarms.

The vipers have the mortification to perceive this, and their rage is increased accordingly. They see your *portrait*, from three different hands, setting them at defiance in the print-shop windows. They hear your *speech* and *resolutions* cried through the streets and sold out of shops in several separate editions. They hear the taverns and public-houses filled with talk about you. They have contrived, by their endeavours to implicate you in a "*treasonable conspiracy*," to excite a strong feeling of some sort or other respecting you in every human breast. And this is *their way of putting a man down!* They have, even by the use of their own columns, made your name *familiar* to the very water's edge of these Islands. They have made you *the only one of your kind*: there is now but one Mr. HUNT in the world. Your ambition must be a cormorant indeed, if this does not satisfy it. No longer ago than Monday, they very seriously announced, that "*HUNT was SEEN, in his Tandem, going towards his home on Thursday last!*" They seem to think that the public is much more interested in your movements than in those of the Prince Regent or of the Queen. I should not wonder if they were to have a "*Court-News Writer*," to give an account of all the movements of your body; and, after what I have seen within these ten days, I do not despair of seeing them announce, that "*on Monday Mr. Hunt took the diversion of shooting till three o'clock. On Tuesday Mr. Hunt went to inspect his barns, and was graciously pleased to express his high approbation of the ingenious mode of laying the crab-stick on upon the sheaves of wheat. On Wednesday, Mr. Hunt gave audience to several tax-gatherers, to whose importunities he did not listen with an overstock of complacency.*" And so on, day after day. Why should I despair of this after what I have seen? Your *Tandem* is be-

come far more renowned than the *Bullet-proof Coach*, and your horse, *Bob*, is far more famous already than the charger of old Blucher?

Oh! the fools! Could not the settled reputation of being the most consummate of *knaves* content them? Was it necessary, in order to satisfy their ambition, to stand unrivalled through the world for folly as well as for knavery?

Gratified, however, as you must be by these demonstrations of the impotent malice of such men, I hope, and, indeed, I am sure, that a more gratifying consideration with you will be, as it ought to be, that these vile men have added to your power of serving your country, and which you will now be the better able to serve, because, having given such ample proofs of earnestness and resolution, you may safely moderate your zeal without risking any imputation of a want of that super-excellent quality. That quality, in which so many men are deficient, you possess to a redundancy. Guard against this excess in future: take in a little sail and add a little to your ballast: exchange a little of the courage of the lion for a little of the wisdom of the serpent: give up a little, and only a very little, of the stubbornness of the oak, for a little, and only a very little, of the pliancy of the reed: do this, and trust to the folly and knavery of these stupid and malignant wretches to make you a *Great Man*.

The situation of the country is becoming day after day more and more perilous, and there can be no relief without a radical cure. The PRINCE in his answer to the City of London (which I shall fully notice by and by) confesses, as he well may, the existence of national *distress* and *difficulty*. These are important words, and especially the last. This is a great change produced since the beginning of last session of parliament, when the wondrous *prosperity* of the country was a prominent theme of the

SPEECH, and when your Wiltshire County Member, Mr. PAUL METHUEN, congratulated the House, that this country had become the pillar of **LEGITIMACY** all over Europe! Alas! how soon things have changed! Misery is a greater teacher than Messrs. Lancaster and Bell both put together.

The Spital-fields Subscription swells at a great rate, and, as a means of *immediate* relief, I am glad it does, though I shall always contend, that whatever degree of *good* may thereby be done, is due to *you* more than to any other person, and more than to all other persons put together; for, it is impossible that the misery should not have *existed before* the first Meeting in Spa-fields; and, why, then, was it not *before* relieved? Mr. BUXTON must have long *known* the facts, which he so eloquently and so affectingly described; and why did he not, then, describe them *sooner*? The miserable sailors have *long* been perishing about the streets with hunger and cold; and why, then, has no measure of relief for them been adopted until *now*? I do not pretend to say, nor do I believe, that the greater part of those who now so freely subscribe, did not before *feel* for the unhappy sufferers; but, this I am quite sure of, that it was your first Meeting and your petition which roused their feelings into immediate action. I do not say, nor do I believe, that the greater part of the Subscribers had *no* real charity in them; but I defy any one to say, that their charity, which before lay dormant, was not quickened by your exertions. One of your flags, or, rather of the flags of the Meeting, which had on it "**FEED THE HUNGRY,**" "**CLOTHE THE NAKED,**" was called by the COURIER "*a standard of rebellion;*" but, it is a standard, under which the Subscribers have hastened to range themselves; for they are serving out *Soup* and *Old Clothes* in all directions! But this *very* COURIER, after the first Meeting, expressly stated,

that the people in and near London, *were not in want*. He said, that, though work had fallen off and wages had been lowered *in the country*, it was *not so* in London ; and he called the poor starving multitudes *mutinous, lazy, and rebellious*. He charged them with designs *to overset the government*, and plainly and distinctly asserted, that they *stood in no need of relief!* How quickly he changed his tone ! And how clearly is that change to be traced *to you !*

But, in the general Subscription for the poor creatures of Spital-fields, you see **only** a small part of the effects of your labours. There have been Meetings in almost *all the parishes* of the Metropolis for similar purposes. Large Subscriptions are going on in every direction. Just as if the poverty and misery were not as great a *month ago* as they are now ! Great indeed they are, and they are producing symptoms so horrible that one sickens but to think of them. Amongst others, take the facts described in *a placard* now sticking against the walls. “ PUBLIC NOTICE.—United Parishes of Saint Andrew Holborn—above Bar, and St. George the Martyr, Queen’s Square. At a Meeting of the Overseers held this day in consequence of MANY PERSONS DESERTING THEIR FAMILIES—it was *resolved*, That, in future, all persons, who desert their Families, whereby they become chargeable to these Parishes, or when the reputed Parents of an illegitimate child abscond, such persons shall be advertised in the public papers or in posting bills, with a full description of their persons, residence, and calling, and other particulars, and a Reward offered for their apprehension. And all Inhabitants harbouring persons for the night, for the like purpose, will be prosecuted accordingly.”

To what are we come at last ! And this is the age of our *glory*, is it ? This

is the situation we are in, when immense sums are voted for the erection of monuments to commemorate the deeds of the last twenty-five years ! This is the state which not to be *proud* of Mr. VANSITTART said was a proof of baseness in an Englishman ! It is in this situation of the country, that Pitt Clubs have the insolence to hold their triumphal carousals ; —Shall we *never see* these men in sack-cloth ? These insolent men, while wallowing in wealth, do not reflect on the pangs which must wring the poor man’s heart before he can so far subdue the feelings of the husband and the father as to make him “ *desert his family* ;” or, if they do reflect on them, they must be more cruel than the storms and the waves. The labouring men in England, generally speaking, are the kindest and most indulgent of husbands and of parents. It has often been observed by me, that they are generally so to a fault. If a boy or girl belonging to them behave ill towards their employers, the father and mother are very hard to be convinced of the fact.—I have often to remonstrate with them upon this subject, and to remind them of how much more indulgent they are to their children than I am to mine. “ Aye, Sir,” said a very good woman to me a little while ago, “ but your children have their belly full of victuals.” The answer was a *silencer*. And this is the true cause of their indulgence, and of their excessive affection too. They see their children in want ; they grow up in continual suffering ; they are incessantly objects of compassion over and above the love which nature has implanted in the parent’s breast. Their obstinate perseverance in justifying the conduct of their children upon all occasions is a fault ; but it arises from the most amiable of human weakness ; and though it may, and often is, injurious in its effects, it is the least censurable of all the frailties of the heart.

If I have here, as I am suré I have,

given the true character of the English Labourer, as a parent and husband, what must that state of things be, which has rendered the *desertion of family* so frequent an offence as to call forth a handbill and placard such as that which I have quoted above? And, in a state of things like this, are men to be called *promoters of sedition*, because they endeavour to point out the real cause of this horrible evil, and also endeavour to point out the remedy? Aye! but in doing this we point at the same time, to the *weight of taxes*; and, we cite Mr. PRESTON in support of our doctrine, who says, that every poor man, who earns *eighteen pounds* in a year, pays away *ten pounds of it in taxes*. Mr. PRESTON's words are these: "Every family, even of the poorest labourer, consisting of five persons, may be considered as paying, in *indirect taxes*, at least *ten pounds a year*, or more than half his wages at seven shillings a week!" And, in another place, he says: "It should always be remembered, that every *eighteen pounds a year* paid to any *placeman or pensioner*, withdraws from the public the means of giving active employment to one individual as the head of a family; thus depriving five persons of the means of sustenance from the fruits of *honest industry and active labour*, and rendering them paupers!"

What! Is this *rebellious* on the part of Mr. PRESTON? He is a Lawyer of great eminence. A Member of Parliament. A man of great landed estate. Could he write and publish this from *rebellious*, from *treasonable* motives? What he says is certainly true; and is he not to say it, because the saying it may be disagreeable to those who live upon the taxes thus collected? Is it not clear, that, if the money, which the Labourer and Journeyman now pay in taxes, were to be suffered to remain in their pockets, they would not stand in need of *parish or subscription re-*

lief? And, if this be *not true*, why does not some one of the numerous tax-eating tribe attempt to prove it false? Have not they their full share of the press at their command? Aye, and more than their share. The sons of Corruption are spreading about *answers to me at a penny each*, and some of them are *given away*. There must be *money*, somewhere, found for this. The sums necessary to do it must be very large too. Are they not content with this superiority? I have no means of *giving papers away*. They say that my writing is *trash*; they call the *Letter to the Luddites* seditious trash; they say I am an ignorant fellow; a shallow man; and so forth. Why, then, are they *in a passion!* Why not *laugh* at me and my trash? Why name me at all? Why break silence after so long a period? They are continually vowing that they will never notice my trash again; but their hatred, like the love of the swain, returns the next hour with more ardour than ever, and scatters their vows to the winds. The most furious amongst them is a *Sine-cure Placeman*, who writes in the *Times* newspaper, and upon whom the droppings of my pen seem to have the same effect as the crumbling of blue-stone or lump-sugar on the proud flesh of a galled jade. He winces and dances and kicks and flings about at a fine rate. Amidst his ravings he swears he will cause me to be hanged; and if he should not succeed, he would, I am sure, if he had any decency, finish his career by tucking up himself, and that too in his ribbon of the Order of St. Lewis.

The truth is, that these men and their assistants and encouragers see their certain doom in the *enlightening of the people*. They see, clearly enough, that conviction must follow facts and arguments like mine *rendered familiar*. They see, that I am uniting the *mind with the muscle* of the country; and, above all things, they see, and they tremble at, my incessant,

and I hope, successful efforts to convince the Labourers and the Journeymen, that they are men who have *rights*, and that the way to obtain those rights is to pursue a *peaceable* and orderly conduct. They hate every one, who dwells upon the *miseries* of the country ; for, *to them*, it is confusion to acknowledge that misery exists. The COURIER asserted, only the other day, that there was *no suffering* in or near London, and *abused* the people for *complaining* ! Such men would kill you or me or any man who talks of the people's sufferings. They call the complaints of hunger *sedition*. These writers are like the wretch, who, unable to force his poor worn-out and starved horse to drag his load along any further, took out his knife and cut his throat. And, I have not the least doubt, those men would see one half of the people's throats cut in order to reduce the rest to silent submission. The following case, taken from their own accounts of Wednesday last, will serve as a specimen of what is going on in London. This is *dying quietly*, according to the recommendations of Mr. JABET's *Old Townsman*, who gave such just offence to the people of Birmingham. "Between twelve and one o'clock on yesterday morning a poor fellow was found in a passage in High-street, Bloomsbury, by Sullivan and Hogan, the watchmen of that district ; he had taken shelter for the night. They requested him to walk on to his lodgings ; he did not answer but walked towards Monmouth-street, and they walked the contrary road. Between two and three o'clock they again found him lying upon a step in the same street ; they asked him if he had no lodgings : he tried to answer but could only move his lips, which gave no utterance. They raised him upon his feet to assist him to the watch-house ; he walked a few yards, and from weakness fell upon his knees. They got him upon their shoulders to

" carry him to the watch-house, but before they arrived with him *he appeared to be dead*. The watchman took him to the workhouse and called up the house surgeon, who examined the body, and said it was useless to bleed him, or use any method to restore him, as *he was quite dead*. The deceased is apparently about fifty years of age, the most complete picture of extreme human misery, having no linen upon his back, and his bones almost through his skin. By his dress he appears to be a workman out of employ. He has not been OWNED."—Look at this, ye vile miscreants, and then say, whether it was a *crime* to call a meeting of the distressed to petition for relief ! Hundreds must perish in this way. Only five days ago I saw more than twenty sailors on Westminster Bridge, neither of whom had any linen on, and some neither *shoes, stockings, nor hat*. But, the numbers who have perished and are perishing from the diseases occasioned by want are not to be counted. And yet, it was a *crime* in you, and the sanguinary sons of Corruption called for your instant execution, because you obeyed the call of the distressed to hold a Meeting of them in Spaffields ! Not to have obeyed that call would indeed have been a crime ; but, it was a crime of which your nature was incapable.

I now come to the *City Petition* and the *answer of the Prince Regent*. This is a very important matter, and, therefore, I shall insert the documents themselves previous to making any remarks on them.

ADDRESS AND PETITION.

" May it please your ROYAL HIGHNESS,
" We, his Majesty's most dutiful and
" loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Alder-
" men, and Commons of the City of Lon-
" don, in Common Council assembled,
" humbly approach your Royal Highness
" to represent our national sufferings and

" grievances, and respectfully to suggest
" the adoption of measures which we
" conceive to be indispensably necessary
" for the safety, the quiet, and prosperity
" of the Realm.

" We forbear to enter into details of
" the afflicting scenes of privations and
" sufferings that every where exist; the
" distress and misery which for so many
" years has been progressively accumu-
" lating, has at length become insupport-
" able—it is no longer partially felt nor
" limited to one portion of the Empire—
" the Commercial, the Manufacturing,
" and the Agricultural Interests are equal-
" ly sinking under its irresistible pressure;
" and it has become impossible to find
" employment for a large mass of the
" population, much less to bear up against
" our present enormous burdens.

" We beg to impress upon your Royal
" Highness, that our present complicated
" evils have not arisen from a mere transi-
" tion from war to peace, nor from any
" sudden or accidental causes—neither
" can they be removed by any partial or
" temporary expedients.

" Our grievances are the natural effect
" of rash and ruinous Wars, unjustly
" commenced and pertinaciously persisted
" in, when no rational object was to
" be obtained—of immense subsidies to
" Foreign Powers to defend their own
" territories, or to commit aggressions on
" those of their neighbours—of a delusive
" Paper Currency—of an unconstitutional
" and unprecedented Military Force in
" time of Peace—of the unexampled
" and increasing magnitude of the Civil
" List—of the enormous sums paid for
" unmerited Pensions and Sinecures—
" and of a long course of the most lavish
" and improvident expenditure of the
" Public Money throughout every branch
" of the Government, all arising from the
" corrupt and inadequate state of the Re-
" presentation of the People in Parliament,
" whereby all constitutional control over

" the servants of the Crown has been lost,
" and Parliaments have become subservient
" to the will of Ministers.

" We cannot forbear expressing our
" grief and disappointment, that notwithstanding
" your Royal Highness's gracious
" recommendation of economy at the
" opening of the last Sessions of Parliament,
" your Ministers should have been
" found opposing every proposition for
" lessening the national expenditure: and
" that they should have been able to obtain
" majorities to support and sanction
" their conduct, in defiance of your Royal
" Highness's recommendation and the declared
" sense of the nation—affording another
" melancholy proof of the corrupt state of the Representation, in addition to those facts so often stated and offered to be proved at the Bar of the House of Commons, in a Petition presented in 1793, by the Hon. Charles, now Lord Grey, whereby it appeared that the great body of the people were excluded from all share in the election of Members, and that the majority of that Honourable House were returned by the Proprietors of rotten Boroughs, the influence of the Treasury, and a few powerful families.

" We can, Sir, no longer support out of our dilapidated resources an overwhelming load of taxation, and we humbly submit to your Royal Highness, that nothing but a reformation of these abuses, and restoring to the People their just and constitutional right in the Election of Members of Parliament, can afford a security against their recurrence—calm the apprehensions of the People—allay their irritated feelings, and prevent those misfortunes in which the nation must inevitably be involved by an obstinate and infatuated adherence to the present system of corruption and extravagance.

" We therefore humbly pray your Royal Highness to assemble Parliament

"as early as possible; and that you will
"be graciously pleased to recommend to
"their immediate consideration these im-
"portant matters, and the adoption of
"measures for abolishing all useless pla-
"ces, pensions, and sinecures; for the
"reduction of our present enormous Mi-
"litary Establishment; for making every
"practicable reduction in the Public Ex-
"penditure, and restoring to the People
"their just share and weight in the Le-
"gislature.

"Signed by order of Court,
"HENRY WOODTHORPE."

PRINCE'S ANSWER.

"It is with strong feelings of *surprise*
"and *regret*, that I receive this Address
"and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Al-
"dermen, and Commons of the City of
"London, in Common Council assem-
"bled.

"Deeply as I deplore the prevailing
"distress and *difficulties* of the country,
"I derive consolation from the persua-
"sion, that the great body of his Ma-
"jesty's subjects, notwithstanding the
"various attempts which have been made
"to irritate and *mislead* them, are well
"convinced, that the severe trials which
"they sustain with such exemplary pa-
"tience and fortitude, are chiefly to be
"attributed to *unavoidable causes*, and I
"contemplate with the most cordial sa-
"tisfaction the efforts of that enlightened
"benevolence which is so usefully and
"laudably exerting itself throughout the
"kingdom.

"I shall resort with the utmost confi-
"dence to the TRIED *wisdom* of Par-
"liament, at the time, which, upon the
"fullest consideration I have thought
"most advisable, under the present cir-
"cumstances of the country; and I en-
"tertain a perfect conviction, that a firm
"and temperate administration of the
"Government, assisted and supported
"by the good sense, public spirit, and

"loyalty of the nation, will effectually
"counteract those proceedings, which,
"from whatever motives they may ori-
"ginate, are calculated to render TEM-
"PORARY difficulties the means of pro-
"ducing PERMANENT and irreparable
"calamity."

The *surprise* and *regret* and the *broad hints* that came after have nettled the Citizens a little. Whether they will show any *bottom* remains to be seen; but, as to the *distress* and *difficulties* being TEMPORARY, and as to their having arisen from UNAVOIDABLE causes, I differ with his Royal Highness, or, rather with his ministers who advised this answer. The distress has been *visibly* proceeding in a regular increase of severity for more than two years; it becomes every day greater and greater; it is deep rooted; it is *destroying the means of resuscitation*; it is ripping up the goose, and taking out the golden eggs; in suspending the operations of labour, it is cutting off the possibility of a speedy return of employment. But, what say the Correspondents of the Board of Agriculture? Not one single man of them, except a parson or two, pretends that the distress is of a temporary nature; on the contrary, 205 of them, out of 322, attribute the ruin to the *weight of taxes!* And, therefore, to make the distress temporary, this weight of taxes must be temporary; and, this is one of the main objects of the prayer of the Citizens of London.

Oh, no! The distress and difficulties have *not* arisen from *unavoidable causes*; for the weight of taxes might have been avoided. However, let me ask the Ministers a few questions here. I will not ask them whether it was unavoidable for the bank to stop payment in cash in 1797; whether it was unavoidable to renew the war in 1803, whether it was unavoidable to persevere in the war with America after the war in England ceased, and, at last, to make peace without

attaining any one object of war; whether it was unavoidable to renew the war in 1815 for the purpose of compelling the French people to give up Napoleon and submit to the Bourbons; whether it was unavoidable to keep up an army to maintain the Bourbons on the throne of France, at a time when thousands of the protestants of the country were butchered or burnt by those who called themselves the *loyal*. I will not put any of these questions to the Ministers; but, with the Official Accounts before me, I will ask them a few questions applicable to the present moment. I ask them, then,

POUNDS.

Was it <i>unavoidable</i> to keep up an army at the expence, including the Ordnance, of	26,736,027
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> that the Ex pence of the Civil List should, in last year, amount to	1,028,000
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> for us to pay in the same year, on account of the deficiencies of the Civil List	534,713
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> that the other ad ditional allowances to the Royal Family, in that year, should amount to	366,660
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> that the Civil List for Scotland should amount to	126,613
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> to give for the relief of suffering French and Dutch Emigrants, in that year, after the Bourbons and the "Orange Boren" had been re stored, the sum of	79,581
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> to expend in that year (including an arrear of the former year) in SECRET SER vice Money, the sum of	158,645
Was it <i>unavoidable</i> to pay, last year, out of the taxes for the relief of the Poor Clergy of the Church of England, the sum of	100,000

I could ask them a great many more questions of a similar nature and tendency, but here are enough for the present; and, if the Citizens of London should happen to be satisfied, that all these expences were *unavoidable*, all the taxes, of course, are unavoidable, and then it is clear, that the present distress and difficulty of the country are to be attributed to unavoidable causes. But, if the Citizens should think, that a very large part, nine tenths for instance, of these expences might have been *avoided*,

then they will come to the opposite conclusion, and, if they be not beaten at a single blow, they will not fail to communicate that conclusion to His Royal Highness.

As to the hint about *irritating* and *mis leading* the people, the charge can apply only to the enemies of Parliamentary Reform; for we deal in soothing language, in the inspiring of hope, and in the pro mulgation of useful political *truth*, and, therefore, the charge cannot apply to us. But, when the Prince is advised to talk of the TRIED *wisdom* of the parliament, he compels us to fix our eyes on those "*dis tresses and difficulties*," of which he is graciously pleased to speak at the same time, and which, at any rate, have grown into being under the existence of that "*TRIED wisdom*."

I have just received from America the most authentic accounts of the happy state of the people there. English goods were selling at auction for a *fourth* of their *prime cost*; and the Americans say, that they are, in this way, *getting back* what they lost by our Orders in Council, under which their ships were seized and condemned. The *ruin*, in America, is wholly confined to the *Agents* and *Mer chants* connected with *England*. The country at large is in the most flourishing state; no beggars, no paupers, no distress, and their news-papers are filled with true accounts of *our* distresses. Still, let us cling to the *Old Ship*, and let us try, in spite of all opposition, to make our own country as happy as America. But, here is another mark of our distresses not being of a *temporary* nature. The market of America is gone for ever as to most articles of manufacture. I shall, however, treat more fully of this another time.

I am, with the greatest respect,
Sir,

Your most obedient,
And most humble servant.

Wm. COBBETT.

The next Register will contain a Letter to the COUNTRY GENTLEMEN on the subject of *Reform*, and on the *Prospects before them*.